

Message Text

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41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DOTE-00 OC-05 CCO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 OPR-02

SY-05 SCCT-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 PM-03 H-02 L-03 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 EURE-00 /098 W

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P 131415Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1029

INFO USMISSION OECD PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 1671

USMISSION OECD PARIS FOR KATZ

DEPT PASS DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY BARNUM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB DA

SUBJ: STRIKES DISRUPT COPENHAGEN AIR AND BUS SERVICES

SUMMARY: TWO SEPARATE, UNCONNECTED STRIKES ARE DISRUPTING
BUS AND AIR SERVICE IN THE COPENHAGEN AREA. THE TWO
STRIKES ARE POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT AS THEY CONSTITUTE
THE FIRST SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INCOMES
POLICY IMPOSED BY LEGISLATION LAST MARCH. PROSPECTS FOR
SETTLEMENT ARE BRIGHTENING AT PRESENT BUT BUS AND,
POSSIBLY, AIR SERVICE MAY CONTINUE TO BE DISRUPTED NEXT
WEEK DURING THE OECD MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT MEETING HERE.

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END SUMMARY.

1. A STRIKE BY SUBURBAN BUS DRIVERS HAS HALTED ALL TRAFFIC ON BOTH SUBURBAN AND CITY BUS ROUTES SINCE JUNE 4. CITY BUS TRAFFIC HAS BEEN STOPPED BY BLOCKADES ESTABLISHED BY THE STRIKING SUBURBAN DRIVERS. THE LATTER - WHOSE BUS LINES WERE ABSORBED LAST YEAR BY A PUBLIC UMBRELLA COMPANY (THE GREATER COPENHAGEN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY)- ARE DEMANDING THE SAME PAY AND BENEFITS AS THEIR COLLEAGUES DRIVING CITY BUSES. THE CITY DRIVERS, WHO HAVE LONG BEEN MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES, HAVE ADVANTAGES IN PENSION AND OTHER NON-WAGE BENEFITS WHICH THEIR SUBURBAN COLLEAGUES, EMPLOYED ORIGINALLY BY PRIVATE COMPANIES, DO NOT ENJOY. THE TWO UNIONS INVOLVED - THE TRANSPORT SECTION OF THE SPECIAL WORKERS UNION (A MEMBER OF THE DANISH TRADE UNION FEDERATION) AND THE INDEPENDENT CHAUFFEUR'S UNION - ADMIT THAT THE STRIKE IS A VIOLATION OF THEIR CONTRACTS, BUT ARGUE THAT THE ALTERED EMPLOYER ARRANGEMENTS JUSTIFY AMENDMENT OF THESE CONTRACTS.

2. THE LABOR COURT HAS HEARD ARGUMENTS FROM BOTH PARTIES AND HAS ISSUED AN INJUNCTION ORDERING THE DRIVERS BACK TO WORK. FINES WILL BE IMPOSED BUT AT THIS POINT NO PREDICTIONS ARE BEING MADE AS TO WHEN TRAFFIC WILL BE RESUMED.

3. AT KASTRUP AIRPORT, 1400 SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES SYSTEM (SAS) AIRCRAFT MECHANICS, TECHNICIANS AND SERVICE PERSONNEL, DEMANDING AN INCREASE OF DKR 5.00 (US\$0.95) PER HOUR, HAVE PERIODICALLY BLOCKADED TAXIWAYS TO AND FROM THE LANDING STRIPS. AS A COUNTERING ACTION, SAS IMPOSED AN 18-HOUR STOP ON ALL TRAFFIC AT KASTRUP JUNE 11 AND 12. THE STRIKE IS FUNDAMENTALLY A POLITICAL ONE AS WAGES FOR THESE WORKERS ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST IN DENMARK. IT IS ORGANIZED BY THE METALWORKERS UNION'S SECTION 13 (WHICH IS UNDER COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP) AND IS INTENDED TO TEST GOVERNMENT AND EMPLOYER RESOLVE TO MAINTAIN THE WAGE LEVELS SET BY THE INCOMES POLICY IMPOSED BY A LAW OF MARCH 11, 1975 EXTENDING ALL EXISTING CONTRACTS FOR TWO YEARS. NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN RESUMED BUT THE CONFLICT MAY YET HAVE TO BE REFERRED TO THE LABOR COURT.

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4. THE TWO STRIKES REPRESENT THE FIRST MAJOR CHALLENGE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INCOMES POLICY. THE GOVERNMENT HAS, CONSEQUENTLY, REFUSED TO INTERVENE IN EITHER STRIKE AND HOPES TO KEEP ITS HANDS OFF AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. GOOD WEATHER RECENTLY HAS PERMITTED THOUSANDS OF DANES TO TURN TO THEIR BICYCLES AS A FORM OF SUMMER RECREATION AND HAS THUS KEPT PUBLIC PRESSURE FOR GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION WITHIN BOUNDS. CONTINUED DISRUPTION OF AIR SERVICE MAY,

HOWEVER, FORCE THE GOVERNMENT'S HAND. IN ANY CASE, IT IS
PROBABLE THAT BUS SERVICE IN COPENHAGEN WILL STILL BE STALLED,
AND POSSIBLE THAT AIR SERVICE WILL BE PERIODIC-
ALLY DISRUPTED, NEXT WEEK DURING THE OECD MEETING HERE OF THE
EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, WAGES, POLICIES, LABOR STRIKES, AIRLINES, MOTOR BUSES, URBAN TRANSPORTATION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COPENH01671
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750206-0962
From: COPENHAGEN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750649/aaaabsmq.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 FEB 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 FEB 2003 by PhilliR0>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STRIKES DISRUPT COPENHAGEN AIR AND BUS SERVICES SUMMARY: TWO SEPARATE, UNCONNECTED STRIKES ARE DISRUPTING
TAGS: ELAB, DA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006